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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TASHKENT 000961

SIPDIS  
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PASS TO AMEMBASSY PODGORICA  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL YEKATERINBURG  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PASS TO AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [UZ](#)  
SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: ANDIJON ACTIVIST OFFERS CONSPIRACY THEORIES

REF: TASHKENT 249; TASHKENT 823; TASHKENT 903

CLASSIFIED BY: Timothy P. Buckley, Second Secretary, Department of State, Political and Economic Section; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. Summary: On June 9, emboffs met with Saidjahon Zaynabiddinov, a well-known human rights activist based in Andijon and a frequent contact for independent websites and the Embassy alike. Zaynabiddinov reported that his youngest son was arrested for a double murder and, although his son confessed to the crime, Zaynabiddinov accused the security services of a far-fetched entrapment plan. The activist also shared his views on the recent terrorist attacks in Andijon, which he suggested President Karimov orchestrated in order to send Russian Prime Minister Putin signals about Uzbekistan's strong desire to cooperate. These theories are a reminder that, although there are few people willing to talk to us in clamped-down Andijon Province, we need to take what independent activists say with a grain of salt. End summary.

Please Do Not Raise this Case

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12. (C) Pol-Econ Chief and poloff met with Zaynabiddinov on June 9, who reported that the youngest of his four sons, 18-year old Nizomiddin, was arrested last week in connection with the stabbing deaths of a prostitute and a pimp in Andijon City. The elder Zaynabiddinov conceded that his son had patronized the prostitute 15 days prior to the murder and that the prostitute's contact information was saved into his son's mobile phone. He also said that his son had acknowledged to investigators that he had committed the crime, although he insists that "it was a clear provocation" and that security services waited until his son turned 18 before baiting him or setting him up. "He's my favorite son and he is pacifist in nature; I know he could not have done this," Zaynabiddinov insisted, going so far as to accuse the security services of providing his son with mind-altering drugs to induce him to commit murder. Nizomiddin was also allegedly accompanied to the crime scene with a friend, and the investigators reportedly have witness testimony to buttress the case against him.

13. (C) While convinced the government put his son up to the crime, he also asked that the Embassy not raise this case with Uzbek

authorities. Zaynabiddinov's eldest son is also currently serving a prison term (ref A), and the latest arrest in the family may be more than the father can bear. "I am in the weakest possible position now," and he explained that his human rights work would be hindered by the government's leverage over the well-being of his incarcerated sons. Zaynabiddinov will attempt to visit Nizomiddin on June 10 and deliver food supplements and basic clothing. Interestingly, Zaynabiddinov said that Deputy Prosecutor General Alisher Sharafutdinov, who has been in Andijon since the recent terrorist incidents, apparently was personally involved in the investigation. (Note: Sharafutdinov has a reputation as a conscientious and reform-minded official dating from his previous position as Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and, likely aware that Zaynabiddinov has contacts with independent media and foreign missions, may have personally tried to ensure that the investigation was on solid footing.)

#### Views on Andijon Attacks

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¶4. (C) Zaynabiddinov told emboffs that on the morning following the apparent terrorist attack in Khanabad on May 26 (ref B), he awoke to find that all cell phone service was suspended; however, he said this is a typical occurrence in Andijon for high-profile events

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such as when the President visits the Province. He said that Internet access was also cut but had been restored, albeit with noticeable reductions in speed, after three days. According to Zaynabiddinov, "to an outside visitor to Andijon nothing would look out of the ordinary," although he commented that residents can sense that tensions have ratcheted up. He said that another incident took place along the border a few days ago in which one person was killed by Uzbek border guards, although Zaynabiddinov insisted it was "just smuggling and had no relation to terrorism or the previous incidents." (Note: This tracks with press reports that a 29-year old Kyrgyz man, Ulugbek Usmonov, was shot dead by Uzbek border guards, reportedly after crossing into Uzbek territory on June 7.)

¶5. (C) Zaynabiddinov shared his theory that President Karimov was "100 percent" behind the May 26 terrorist incidents rather than an organized terrorist group. The motive, according to Zaynabiddinov, was to send a signal to the Russians (and particularly to Putin) that he is still in control of the country and can respond effectively to security threats. Zaynabiddinov said to expect more such signals "when Putin returns to the Presidency in Russia." The activist added that a state of emergency on occasion also is necessary to renew Karimov's mandate to crack down on perceived extremists, such as "Wahabbiists and Akromists" in the Ferghana Valley. Yet, for the sake of balance, Zaynabiddinov predicted another amnesty in which numerous religious prisoners will be released to make Karimov look magnanimous. Zaynabiddinov pointed to Karimov's departure for a state visit to Brazil as conveniently timed so that he could distance himself from the alleged terror acts on Uzbek soil, and he further questioned "what kind of idiot would attack a concrete reinforced border bunker" when there are any number of less fortified police targets in the vicinity. "But then again that is just my paranoid human rights defender mentality," Zaynabiddinov concluded.

Comment:

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¶6. (C) While we cannot conclude that Zaynabiddinov's youngest son is indeed guilty of the murder, his father's request that we stay silent and the severe nature of the charges (preferred methods of framing tend to be planted narcotics or allegations of blackmailing) suggest this is not a government ploy to silence this Andijon activist. Zaynabiddinov's conspiratorial view that Karimov is behind the Andijon terror acts in order to impress Russia is completely at odds with other accounts and rationale, including ironically the President's own conspiracy theory (ref C). Andijon is tightly controlled and there are few people willing to risk being an activist, let alone talk to us, but this meeting is a reminder that we need to take what local activists like Zaynabiddinov (and many of the Internet "news" sites for which they are frequently sources) report with a grain of salt. He has provided reliable information in the past, but in this case he seems off the mark.

NORLAND